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## Airpower in the Context of a Dysfunctional Joint Doctrine

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Carl R. Pivarsky Jr.  
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

Air War College  
Maxwell Paper No.7



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## ***Foreword***

This important research deals with the intellectual foundation of the American profession of arms—our joint doctrine. The author, Lt Col Carl R. Pivarsky Jr., USAF, argues that the current doctrine development process has become a zero-sum game driven by the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff (CJCS) declaring joint doctrine to be “authoritative.” The resultant interservice competition has produced a keystone joint doctrine publication, Joint Publication (Pub) 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, that unfortunately has been corrupted to serve parochial service interests.

This research focuses on that document and the impact it has on how we think about high-intensity, conventional combat operations. Specifically, it deals with the corruption of the definitions of maneuver and interdiction to serve parochial land force interests. The author shows in detail how definitions and terms have destroyed the command authority of the joint force air component commander (JFACC) and relegated air component capabilities solely to the support of surface maneuver commanders.

Lieutenant Colonel Pivarsky believes the lack of intellectual integrity of Joint Pub 3-0 debases the entire joint doctrine process; it must be corrected. The author's recommended solution is to revise the joint definitions of maneuver and interdiction to preclude their ownership by a specific type of military organization and to give the Air Force its rightful and earned place at the doctrine table. A rewrite of Joint Pub 3-0 is required to reflect joint force capabilities for full-dimensional operations, not simply land force dominance of the entire battlefield. Sea, air, and space force dominance deserve equal discussion in this keystone joint operations doctrine.

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The author also calls for the CJCS to review the basic paradigm used in joint doctrine. The current structure leads to rigidity by design, producing a cookbook (a set of recipes), not a book on cooking (an intellectual framework for thinking about joint warfare). Finally, this study proposes areas for additional doctrinal study.



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## ***About the Author***

Lt Col Carl R. Pivarsky Jr. became involved in the study of joint and combined doctrine as a fighter pilot and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) plans officer with the 78th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Royal Air Force, Woodbridge, United Kingdom, in 1980. Since that time he has been involved in teaching air employment tactics and doctrine at the squadron and wing level, as well as serving as chief, theater air warfare instruction, at the US Army Command and General Staff College from 1992 through 1995. During his tour at Fort Leavenworth, his article, "Dangerous Doctrine," an earlier look at the problems with joint doctrine, appeared in the *Military Review*, September 1993.

A joint specialty officer, Lieutenant Colonel Pivarsky is a distinguished graduate of the USAF Fighter Weapons Instructor Course and a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College and the Armed Forces Staff College. He has served as instructor pilot during four separate flying assignments, amassing over 3,000 hours in the A-10 and F-15E. Lieutenant Colonel Pivarsky is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1996.

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## Airpower in the Context of a Dysfunctional Joint Doctrine

*Joint warfare is team warfare.*

—Joint Pub 1

This research paper is about team warfare—more specifically, the intellectual foundation that makes joint warfare work. To build on the sports metaphor used in Joint Publication (Pub) 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, each member of the joint war-fighting team occupies a skill position determined by his or her core competence. Integrating, not simply synchronizing, the actions of these players is mostly an intellectual exercise that defines the art of joint war fighting. Ideally, this intellectual framework, free of bias, is provided for us in joint doctrine.

The work required to establish a national doctrinal basis for the development and employment of the armed forces, our joint doctrine, is critical in equipping the joint force commander (JFC) and his or her subordinates with the intellectual foundation required to make informed joint force decisions. As in any team activity, this intellectual framework has to adequately address all the elements of the game. A short list would include, but not be limited to, the capabilities and limitations of the players on each side; how the teams are organized, trained, and equipped; how the members execute as a team; the terrain and weather; air support; the rules of the game; the length of the contest; and the desired result. In the world of sports, the intellectual integrative power is supplied by the coach. In joint war fighting, the coach is the theater commander in chief (CINC) or JFC.

Since joint warfare is team warfare, it is important to understand what holds the team together. The values in joint warfare as outlined in Joint Pub 1<sup>1</sup> is the logical starting point. “First and always is **integrity**.<sup>2</sup> It is the cornerstone for building trust between the components; without trust there is no team. Building upon integrity, competence and moral courage are dual values that allow

team players to do the right thing regardless of personal risk. Trust and confidence are linked by the “integrity, ability, and good character” of each team member. In joint war fighting, delegation of authority “commensurate with responsibility”<sup>3</sup> is a recurring requirement in building and maintaining a team atmosphere. Cooperation, which is naturally in tension with competition, must prevail if the team is to succeed. Actions taken to win an interservice battle can lose the war for the joint team.

These values of joint warfare, presented in the capstone publication, Joint Pub 1, are essential to building effective fighting teams. Amid the myriad of dangers facing the armed forces of the United States, it seems curious that we create for ourselves a doctrine of team warfare that undermines rather than builds trust between team members—a joint doctrine that minimizes demonstrated dimensional supremacy in pursuit of more limited objectives. Our current doctrine does not assign, but in fact actually inhibits assigning, authority commensurate with responsibility in certain mission areas.

Current joint doctrine is charting a dangerous course—one that limits the options available to a joint force commander by providing an intellectually constraining view of high-intensity, conventional combat operations. The process has been incremental; yet the emergence of a dominant land maneuver bias, fueled by parochial interests and sustained by its own internal logic, threatens to corrupt the intellectual foundation of the American profession of arms.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the most glaring examples of parochial interests manifested in our current joint doctrine. It highlights instances of intellectual dishonesty at the very core of the keystone publication, Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*. The doctrinal center of gravity is the concept of maneuver. How maneuver is defined and used creates an internal logic that corrupts command relationships and battle-space geometry, destroys the trust required in joint warfare, and creates seams in joint operations that are exploitable by the enemy. This paper examines instances where surface force tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) are elevated to

doctrinal concepts while previous core doctrinal issues, specifically sea and air control, are relegated to supporting publications. We will also investigate how doctrinally imposed convoluted command relationships increase internal friction on the joint team, specifically in regard to the area of interdiction.

Now, about moral courage. As defined in Joint Pub 1, moral courage "includes the willingness to stand up for what we believe is right even if that stand is unpopular or contrary to conventional wisdom."<sup>4</sup> The issues addressed here are controversial; although they raise charges of parochialism, they have also provoked charges of parochialism in return. Since this issue can easily be clouded by emotion, it is incumbent upon both the author and the reader to approach this discussion with the head and not the heart. The issues presented here must be resolved if we are to develop an effective war-fighting team that capitalizes on the unique capabilities of each of the players.

This research is presented in three main parts. First, we demonstrate how the core concept of maneuver has been corrupted to increase the relative importance of certain members of the joint team. In the process, we show how the logic required to support a corrupt maneuver definition impacts the whole of Joint Pub 3-0, and therefore also corrupts all its supporting doctrinal publications. Second, we show how the problems with maneuver impact the concept of interdiction, creating an untenable command and control situation and unacceptable friction between components. Finally, we recommend specific measures to correct the major discrepancies and suggest areas for further study.

### **The Joint Concept of Maneuver**

Within the current doctrinal debate there is a single *center of gravity*: the concept of maneuver. As we will demonstrate, maneuver forms the basis for all command relationships; establishes all control relationships; and has become the foundation upon which forces are organized, trained, and equipped to fulfill their wartime missions.

Airpower is critical within the maneuver context. However, the perennial conflict between the services over how airpower is controlled (centralized versus decentralized), by whom (a surface commander or an air commander), and where it will be focused (close air support or independent air operations) has led to a joint doctrinal definition that specifically excludes the Air Force from the concept of maneuver. It has produced a doctrine for joint operations that is riddled with contradictions, is intellectually dishonest, and creates exploitable seams. This is unacceptable by any standard, and it gets worse with every revision of joint doctrine.

Maneuver is a powerful concept, yet airmen, more specifically Air Force airmen, are the only shooters on the battlefield who are not included in the joint maneuver concept. The importance of this deliberate exclusion of Air Force-supplied airpower needs to be understood and opposed, not only by airmen but by anyone wishing to harness the potential of joint force capabilities.

To better appreciate the complexities of this joint doctrine discussion, it is necessary to fully explain the language and implications of the definition of maneuver.

### **Maneuver Definition and Intent**

Maneuver is a principle of war that appears in all service basic doctrinal publications like Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force*; Naval Doctrine Publication 1, *Naval Warfare*; and Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*.<sup>5</sup> According to Joint Pub 3-0, “the principal purpose of maneuver is to gain a positional advantage relative to enemy centers of gravity in order to control or destroy those centers of gravity.”<sup>6</sup> It is important to understand from the start that maneuver is distinguished from sheer movement by its relationship to the enemy. Maneuver is defined by its intent to gain **positional**<sup>7</sup> advantage relative to the enemy through which control is exercised by force or the threat of force.

This concept of maneuver implies a number of tasks. First, you must identify an enemy center of gravity. Then you must locate it within your battle space, avoid enemy

defenses to get into a position to control that center of gravity through the threat of force, or if necessary, possess the forces required to destroy that center of gravity. At face value, maneuver does not require a specific force type or mix and is, therefore, applicable to any military force: land, sea, air, or special operations forces, as long as they can accomplish these tasks.

The importance of maneuver is further refined in Joint Pub 3-0:

Maneuver is the movement of forces in relation to the enemy to secure or retain positional advantage, usually in order to deliver—or threaten delivery of—the direct and indirect fires of the maneuvering force. Effective maneuver keeps the enemy off balance and thus also protects the friendly force. It contributes materially in exploiting successes, preserving freedom of action, and reducing vulnerability by continually posing new problems for the enemy.<sup>8</sup>

This additional implied task of security is accomplished by attacking from a direction or means unexpected by the enemy and altering those means to remain unpredictable. Airpower, which is unencumbered by the problems of surface movement, can maneuver with great speed to a positional advantage relative to the enemy. It can apply both direct and indirect fires from great range and altitude. Airpower's tempo, timing, and attack means can be continually adjusted to keep an enemy off balance while protecting the force. In many ways, airpower appears to be the consummate maneuver instrument.<sup>9</sup> The concept of *aerial maneuver* is at the core of the views expressed by airmen since the days of Giulio Douhet and Billy Mitchell. This is where the good news ends. Our joint doctrine recognizes only certain types of forces as maneuver.

Joint doctrine's further refinement of maneuver demonstrates a puzzling doctrinal schizophrenia. Although maneuver would appear logically to apply to all forces, and all dimensions of the battle space (it in fact does), joint doctrine recognizes only land and naval surface maneuver.<sup>10</sup> Tying the concept of maneuver to a type of force is in no way supported by the definition of maneuver intent; and the impact is to immediately limit the options available to the JFC. This is the root cause of all the problems we address from here forward—restricting maneuver to land and naval forces.

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## **6 AIRPOWER ... A DYSFUNCTIONAL JOINT DOCTRINE**

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The problem created by excluding airpower from maneuver is immediately apparent. Since both land and naval forces have considerable investments in air assets, great pains are taken to include air assets that are owned and controlled by surface maneuver forces within the maneuver context, while specifically excluding Air Force-supplied airpower. The reason for separating Air Force-supplied air assets from maneuver will be addressed shortly. First, we have to see how the maneuver concept is defined to serve parochial surface force interests.

The answer is provided in Joint Pub 3-0. According to our joint doctrine, “land and naval maneuver (*which includes the action of air assets organic to the surface force* [emphasis added]) is required to control population, territory, and key waters.”<sup>11</sup> This additional modification of the maneuver definition acknowledges that control can be attained by air assets that are organic to the surface force since they are part of land and naval maneuver. What this means is that a Marine Corps F/A-18, since it is organic to the surface force, is considered to be capable of land and naval maneuver. Air action by that fighter, therefore, can control, or contribute to the control of, population, territory, and key waters. Following this logic, Navy air is organic to the surface naval force, and Army attack aviation is an integral part of the land surface maneuver force; they also qualify as maneuver-capable forces. However, an Air Force fighter, squadron of bombers, or the entire Air Force for that matter, is not maneuver because it is not organic to a surface force. Air Force air assets cannot “control population, territory, and key waters” because they are not organic to the surface force, not because they exhibit any other limitation in the definition of maneuver.

Although this distinction between air assets that are organic to a surface force and other air assets fails any common sense test and is intellectually dishonest; it appears throughout joint doctrine and thoroughly corrupts it. The integrity of the entire joint doctrine process is destroyed by imposing this artificial distinction between air asset capabilities depending solely on who owns or controls them. All subsequent attempts to derive a joint

doctrine that is capable of fighting a team and exploiting its true capabilities is lost.

However, this distinction between surface force organic air assets and Air Force air assets is required to establish the conditions to exclude Air Force commanders from actually commanding. It is required to force Air Force assets back into the fire support roles that surface commanders understand and desire to control. This distinction minimizes airpower on a theater scale and is supported only within the logic of current and emerging joint doctrine. It has no historical basis and is patently dishonest.

The reason to keep Air Force air assets from being treated as maneuver forces is tied to the fact that the Air Force is a proponent of a theater-wide joint force air component commander (JFACC). If the JFACC was considered to be a maneuver commander, it would alter the command dynamics of the theater at the expense of surface maneuver commanders. This is because maneuver commanders are assigned an area of operations (AO) by the JFC.<sup>12</sup> This is accomplished by the JFC's establishing boundaries for those forces within the theater. Boundaries are a control measure that define "surface areas to facilitate coordination and deconfliction of operations."<sup>13</sup>

Inside a maneuver commander's boundary, he or she is the *supported commander for all operations* and can dictate what happens down to the "when, where, why, what, how, and by whom." This determination of who is in charge is no small matter and is a considerable source of friction within the surface component as well as between functional components.

How much of the surface battle space is controlled by each maneuver commander is determined by the width and depth of the AO assigned by the JFC. In designing the theater structure, JFCs may use "forward"<sup>14</sup> boundaries to limit the depth controlled by the subordinate maneuver commanders. However, a forward boundary is not required by joint doctrine, is rarely used, and should not be confused with a limit of advance.

What this means is that the air component commander (ACC), since he or she is not a maneuver commander, does not own any part of the JFC's surface battle space unless

specifically given an AO by the JFC. But this would be problematic since AOs are doctrinally assigned to maneuver commanders and the air component does not qualify (by joint definition). Consequently, since the air component owns no part of the battlefield, the ACC does not control any part of the battlefield in the sense that a supported maneuver commander does. Since the air component cannot exercise control inside a maneuver commander's AO, the air component has no need for command *per se*. The logic runs: if you don't command and don't control, you might as well be commanded and controlled. This same logic supports the argument for redesignating the JFACC as the joint force air component *coordinator*, instead of the joint force air component *commander*.

The issue of who controls friendly forces is resolved in the maneuver definition. It results in the piecemealing of air component capabilities (specifically Air Force assets) based on the relative strength (both political and military) of surface maneuver commanders in the theater. The language required to support this doctrinal position becomes twisted and difficult enough in peacetime. It leaves unanswered the question of how ownership by a surface force changes the essential character and capability of air assets. In many ways, the discussion of the capabilities of one type of air asset as opposed to another seems schizophrenic.

Demonstrating the notion of doctrinal schizophrenia is not difficult. Three pages after the Air Force is excluded from maneuver, Joint Pub 3-0 presents a vignette about how land-based airpower controlled *key waters* in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea.<sup>15</sup> Maneuver, by definition, is "required to control population, territory, and *key waters*."<sup>16</sup> In this battle, it was air action by land-based Army Air Forces that caused the Japanese to abort their "second projected offensive against Wau, New Guinea"<sup>17</sup> by controlling *key waters*. The Japanese could not get through key waters because fixed wing air controlled it, and *maneuver is required to control key waters*. Every criterion in the maneuver definition was met by land-based air assets. Doesn't it logically follow that air action in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea was maneuver by definition? The joint doctrine answer is *no*.

Air action during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea was not maneuver—our doctrine says it was interdiction. It is called interdiction even though General MacArthur stated that “our decisive success cannot fail to have the most important results on the enemy’s strategic and tactical plans.”<sup>18</sup> Joint doctrine calls it interdiction even though successful air action against a Japanese operational center of gravity disrupted his strategic and tactical plans. Even though success in this case was accomplished through our ability to “concentrate forces at decisive points”<sup>19</sup> through the use of airpower, it curiously does not qualify as maneuver. We call the Battle of the Bismarck Sea interdiction even though one of the three types of joint force maneuvers defined in Joint Pub 3-0, “sustained action at sea and from the sea,”<sup>20</sup> was demonstrated by land-based airpower. The reason to call it something other than maneuver is fairly clear if you see the logic of our current joint doctrine. Air operations that are not owned and controlled by the surface maneuver commander as organic assets cannot be allowed to execute maneuver independent of the surface force. Keeping an Air Force commander from being a maneuver commander has become a joint doctrinal imperative.

In the joint doctrine definition, interdiction simply “diverts, disrupts, delays, or destroys the enemy’s surface or sub-surface military potential before it can be used effectively against friendly forces.”<sup>21</sup> Nowhere in the definition of interdiction will you see the words *decisive* or *control*. Although it may be important to the overall success of an operation or campaign, interdiction simply sets the conditions for successful maneuver. Although “maneuver by land or naval forces can be conducted to interdict enemy surface potential,”<sup>22</sup> interdiction-capable forces are not necessarily maneuver forces by definition. On closer examination, you will find that only Air Force interdiction forces do not also perform as maneuver forces. I won’t sugarcoat it; this distinction is intellectually dishonest, but is consistent with the internal logic of our joint doctrine.

Being considered a maneuver force is critical in joint doctrine. The implications of the apparently astigmatic exclusion of the Air Force are evident in supporting

publications currently under development. They are beginning to border on the absurd as proponents appear consumed by the illogical arguments required to support the joint maneuver definition and to exclude the Air Force from any part of maneuver. If the current second draft of Joint Pub 3-09, *Doctrine for Joint Fire Support*, is approved as written, strategic offensive forces (SOF) will "by name" be added to maneuver. "The appropriate SOF commander is the supported commander and is responsible for synchronizing his maneuver and supporting fires. He does so by designating the target priority, desired effects, and timing of such operations."<sup>23</sup> This means that seven guys with rifles and some radios in a spider hole somewhere outside another maneuver commander's AO are maneuver, but the entire Air Force is not. The only thing that supports this exclusion of Air Force airpower is our current joint doctrine; common sense and honest appraisal of battlefield effects do not apply here.

The most powerful Air Force in history is barred from equal participation in the joint maneuver paradigm by current joint doctrine. Its logic is carefully crafted to keep the air component from command of any portion of the JFC's battle space. The air component is denied the command authority that can be exercised by any other shooter on the battlefield. This corrupt intellectual baggage is in direct conflict with the Joint Pub 1 discussion of "values in joint warfare." It undermines trust and confidence, "one of the most important ingredients in building strong teams."<sup>24</sup>

## **Interdiction**

The joint doctrine discussion on maneuver clearly excludes Air Force airpower. However, the intellectual corruption of the maneuver argument also impacts the joint discussion of interdiction. Joint Pub 3-0 defines interdiction as "an action to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's surface military potential before it can be used effectively against friendly forces."<sup>25</sup> Like the initial definition of maneuver, interdiction does not require any prescribed force type or mix. How to interdict is left to the

imagination of the commander; therefore, the definition is not intellectually constraining.

Where the definitions of interdiction and maneuver diverge is in their focus. The maneuver definition places the focus on enemy centers of gravity, which can be military, political, economic, geographic, and so forth. By contrast, interdiction is enemy-force oriented without a qualifier as to the importance of that particular enemy's force or its capabilities. Where maneuver is defined in relation to the enemy's national capabilities, interdiction is defined by the relation of friendly forces to enemy surface military capability. This relationship has two variables: distance and time.

The distance variable is the easiest to understand. It can quickly lead to a comparison of the relative ranges of weapon systems. The side with the longest range weapon is capable of interdicting the other side's surface military potential by engaging outside the range of the enemy's weapon systems. The assumption here is that enemy targets can be acquired and engaged inside the range advantage enjoyed by the interdicting force. The desire to out-range the adversary has a direct impact on how you organize and equip the force. Ideally, you want to give your forces every advantage of range you can afford to make them capable of interdiction. Airpower, in all of its forms, is an excellent interdiction means.

The time variable is harder to quantify. The time available may be determined by the enemy's ability to close with friendly forces. In this case, interdiction may be an engineering, countermobility operation, or other action to delay or divert the enemy. Time could also be defined in relation to John Boyd's OODA [observe, orient, decide, act] loop. If you are able to disrupt the enemy's decision-making cycle, denying him the ability to organize and act, you can disrupt the entire operation, thereby increasing the security of your own force.

Although distance and time may be interrelated, the intellectual framework of the definition of interdiction itself does not limit how the commander attacks the problem. Interdiction categorized by the medium in which it is executed causes problems. Drawing a doctrinal line between air interdiction and other means of interdiction creates

considerable friction in joint cooperation and degrades team performance.

The reason to distinguish between air interdiction and other forms of interdiction is centered around the issue of control. The perturbations of the maneuver discussion are extended to the area of interdiction to provide a doctrinal basis for the surface commander owning the missions that prove ultimately decisive. Interdiction, historically a core competence of airpower, has become both more important and more attainable in the context of conventional, high-intensity combat because of technology. Consequently, two main factors are currently driving surface maneuver commanders to perform interdiction and, if possible, to wrest control of the mission from the air component through doctrine.

The dominant factor is the laudable desire to win decisively *with minimum casualties*. If you are successfully interdicting the enemy, by definition he cannot bring forces to bear against you; therefore, either low or no casualties will result. The definition of interdiction has many of the elements of the definition of maneuver discussed earlier, and for that reason there is little friction in a maneuver commander's performing that mission. Attacking the enemy before his forces can be brought to bear on friendly forces provides the protection and security that maneuver provides.

What is missing from the interdiction definition is the focus on an integrating concept or strategy such as *center of gravity*. Lack of this type of focus can cause serious problems. For example, a targeting methodology that stresses shortening the time between detecting a target and delivering ordnance could easily commit precious resources against unimportant targets. The second factor is that technology has provided the surface maneuver commander with the ability to see and, to a limited degree, use organic assets to strike targets at interdiction ranges or within interdiction time windows. When you add these two factors together, the close fight (the core competency of the surface force) is becoming less important than the interdiction fight. In theory, a perfectly executed interdiction effort would obviate the need for close combat or maneuver. The

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surface commander therefore wants to get control of the interdiction fight within the maneuver paradigm to maintain control of the forces winning the decisive victory. Interdiction, and not close combat, is truly the road to decisive victory in accordance with American expectations. So what does joint doctrine tell us about interdiction and how it is commanded and controlled in a theater of war?

For starters, according to joint doctrine, the air commander is the supported commander for the "JFC's overall air interdiction effort."<sup>26</sup> Great, but what does that really mean, and does it really matter? The short answer was provided earlier in the maneuver discussion entitled The Joint Concept of Maneuver; without an air AO it means nothing and does not matter. Joint doctrine makes the air interdiction issue purposefully fuzzy. The reason is to place control of interdiction-capable air assets under the direct control of the surface maneuver commander. Here is how.

Air interdiction is simply a subset of overall theater interdiction. The JFC is the supported commander for the theater interdiction effort. Forces for this effort are generated by all commanders who have interdiction-capable forces, including special operations commanders. In addition to JFC priorities, all maneuver commanders, including special operations, have interdiction priorities in their AOs. Without a forward boundary specified, it is impossible to determine where air interdiction, which is under the command of the air component, occurs without some additional control measure specified by the JFC or the surface maneuver commander(s). Joint Pub 3-0 provides additional weight to surface maneuver commander control of interdiction by stating that, within their AOs, the maneuver force commander is the supported commander for air interdiction.<sup>27</sup>

Again, falling into its own internal logic, Joint Pub 3-0 makes both the JFACC and the surface maneuver commander the supported commander for air interdiction. The real determinant of who is the supported commander for air interdiction is which AO it occurs in. Since the JFACC does not have an AO, the supported commander is the JFC or the surface maneuver commander. The JFACC is simply executing air interdiction as a supporting commander. He or

she is not a commander in this case, but simply a force provider. His or her command authority is usurped within the confines of the maneuver commander's AO by the maneuver commander who is so empowered by the JFC.

The JFACC has no command authority since he or she does not synchronize maneuver and supporting fires, which a commander does by designating the "target priority, effects, and timing of interdiction operations within their AOs."<sup>28</sup> This type of convoluted command relationship occurs nowhere else in joint doctrine. It impacts only air assets (read, the Air Force) that are not organic to, or controlled by, the surface force. Without an AO, or recognized command authority commensurate with responsibility, how do you hold the JFACC responsible for the theater air interdiction effort success or failure when he or she is being told what to do by multiple surface maneuver commanders, not the JFC? The JFACC is not given the authority commensurate with the responsibility assigned in Joint Pub 3-0 as the supported commander for air interdiction. But the JFACC is still held responsible.

*Certain Victory*, the US Army's official account of Desert Storm, avidly recounts the air component's "failure" to support the surface maneuver commander's scheme of maneuver. In many ways, *Certain Victory* is a frontal assault on the integrity of the JFACC as defined in Joint Pub 1. However, that attack displays a puzzling lack of understanding of existing joint doctrine. What the corps commanders failed to understand, and the Army as an institution fails to recognize, is that the JFACC worked for the theater commander. If the theater commander wanted the corps commander's interdiction priorities to be theater priorities, he simply told the air component commander, and that decision would be reflected in his apportionment decision. In Desert Storm, the joint force commander did not place the theater priority for interdiction on ground maneuver commander-specified priorities until just before the execution of the ground operation; yet, *Certain Victory* lays the blame on the JFACC. This institutional finger pointing is reinforced by a corrupt joint doctrine.

Within this doctrinal discussion, airmen have to be careful not to confuse air interdiction with deep operations

or deep maneuver. For Army attack aviation, operations that disrupt, delay, divert, and destroy enemy military capability before it can be brought to bear against friendly forces fall under either deep operations or maneuver. Although this type of operation looks like, smells like, and sounds like interdiction, it is not interdiction. According to joint doctrine, it is not interdiction and certainly is not air interdiction. It is maneuver! It is maneuver because attack aviation is organic to the surface force, and by that simple fact Army attack aviation forces are maneuver forces. Joint Pub 3-0 boldly states that “land force attack aviation, *if able to strike at the opponent’s centers of gravity* [emphasis added], also has positional advantage.”<sup>29</sup> The sufficient condition to be maneuver, the ability to strike a *center of gravity*, distinguishes attack helicopter operations from air interdiction.

By this point, it is easy to see why surface maneuver force assets (attack helicopters) are excluded from any discussion of interdiction. If helicopter deep operations were termed interdiction, they might logically fall under the JFACC who, according to joint doctrine, is the supported commander for air interdiction. Additionally, keeping them out of the interdiction discussion by cloaking them in maneuver language avoids the coordination with the JFACC in executing his or her responsibility for planning and executing the “theater-wide interdiction effort,”<sup>30</sup> keeps them off the air tasking order (ATO) and out of its planning process, and relieves them of significant airspace coordination order processes and procedures.

Extreme measures are taken to call air interdiction by Army aviation “maneuver in the ground environment.” Air interdiction by Army attack aviation assets is called maneuver and not interdiction to keep it away from air component command; intellectually dishonest—yes, but consistent with joint doctrine. Keeping attack aviation exclusively maneuver by definition allows the surface commander to project control over more of the surface battlefield and avoid having to actually support the JFACC in the theater air interdiction effort. This runs counter to the desire to generate teamwork and trust in team warfare, but is doctrinally sanctioned in Joint Pub 3-0.

*Certain Victory* goes a long way toward destroying the integrity, trust, and confidence in joint doctrine. This Army official history teaches us that control can only be achieved by surface forces, even if those forces are aviation forces organic to the surface force. Quite arrogantly it states that "by flying low and slow and by maintaining constant close-up observation of the ground, the 101st maintained control over an area of Iraq 160x380 kilometers."<sup>31</sup> Therefore, control of terrain by air assets organic to the surface force has been demonstrated and acknowledged by the US Army. However, in the Army view, as well as current joint doctrine definitions, control of terrain, like control of key waters, cannot be accomplished by air assets that are independent of the surface force. JFACC-controlled air assets do not have the capability to control terrain but the attack aviation of the 101st does. This self-aggrandizing doublespeak debases jointness and seriously calls into question the intellectual integrity of the US Army and our joint doctrine.

Army aviation forces are maneuver forces, even though airborne, because they are not part of the air component. Army aviation doctrinal publications go to the extreme of stating that although attack aviation breaks friction with the surface of the earth, they operate in the ground environment and not the aerospace environment.<sup>32</sup> This distinction is required to keep Army aviation independent of an ACC. Once the Army takes control of the depth of the battlefield, previously the domain of the Air Force, the relevance of a separate air component is diminished. The problem with this approach is that it seriously limits the synergy of joint operations and denies the JFC the use of a true full-dimensional maneuver force. Joint Pub 3-0 has established the doctrinal foundation for limiting the impact of the most powerful air force in the history of the world.

### **Doctrinal Friction**

This doctrinal doublespeak creates obvious problems. It is an acknowledged source of friction between components. Joint Pub 3-0 states that "JFCs alleviate this friction through clear statements of intent for theater/JAO-level

interdiction (that is, interdiction effort conducted relatively independent of surface maneuver operations).<sup>33</sup> This attempt to clarify the interdiction issue makes matters even worse. The phrase "relatively independent" is not defined. On the issue of "communicated intent," we are again left with the possibility of alternate interpretations that only exacerbate the problem of component friction by creating unanswered questions and gray areas and provide a fertile field for the breakdown of trust between components.

QUESTION: Does theater interdiction occur strictly outside the surface maneuver commander's AO or simply "relatively independent of surface maneuver operations?"<sup>34</sup> From a surface maneuver commander perspective, "relatively independent" could mean beyond the fire support coordination line (FSCL) where actions by others require only coordination. If theater interdiction occurs inside the FSCL, it could be in direct conflict with the surface maneuver commander. So in this case, does the JFC usurp the authority previously given to the surface maneuver commander in the execution of the theater interdiction mission or does he or she hand over responsibility for that mission to the surface maneuver commander?

QUESTION: How is theater air interdiction integrated into theater interdiction and who controls it? As already discussed in Joint Pub 3-0, there are three different supported commanders for air interdiction: the JFC, JFACC, and the surface maneuver commander. Which one is actually the supported commander is more subject to interpretation politics than to military wisdom. It is clear, however, that only the JFACC's authority is always subject to the acquiescence of the surface maneuver commander.

What is required here is the delineation of command authority—a command decision by the JFC, not fuzzy intent. We do not need convoluted definitions that produce "intent" as a dodge for the JFC. The commander in chief (CINC) is trusted with making, not avoiding, the hard decision of drawing the optimum boundary between functional component commanders when and where it is appropriate to do so. Everyone understands a boundary. Anything short of one creates confusion and distrust between components,

but most importantly, provides sanctuaries for the enemy by creating exploitable seams in our operations.

### **Sanctuaries for the Enemy**

This concept of a sanctuary for the enemy was dramatically illustrated during Desert Storm. The sequence of events creating that sanctuary was a direct result of the erosion of JFACC authority, the desire to control the "decisive engagement," and adherence to the convoluted logic trail required by current joint doctrine. The sad truth is that it was also perfectly consistent with joint doctrine.

With the start of the ground offensive, the JFC failed to establish a forward boundary for surface maneuver forces. This action de facto abdicated to unspecified subordinates responsibility for deconflicting component fires. To fill this void, multiple surface maneuver commanders, at a level below that of a component commander, established FSCLs within their AOs. Due to fratricide concerns and the lack of JFC guidance, the FSCL was treated as a boundary between surface and air components. The JFACC, Lt Gen Charles A. Horner, was in essence told by VII and XVIII Corps commanders where he would be allowed to operate as a commander. Their action was totally consistent with joint doctrine.

The mission of the VII Corps was to destroy the Republican Guard Forces Command (RGFC). For total control of that fight, an FSCL was placed past them (the RGFC). The VII Corps' plan required three heavy divisions that it had trouble bringing on line. The FSCL was deeper than VII Corps could reach with anything but attack helicopters, of which there were insufficient numbers for the mission. VII Corps could not get additional aviation from XVIII Corps since they had plans for their organic helicopter forces and, also, because the Army does not have a theater view for employment of their organic "aerial maneuver."<sup>35</sup> To an airman, this sounds a lot like North Africa in 1942, where airpower was organic to the surface force and was organized, trained, and equipped to operate only in that surface commander's AO. Abundant additional airpower was readily available from the air component, but the FSCL placement precluded any air component-supplied mission

other than close air support (CAS). The *required* control mechanisms were not put in place to allow that to happen. The result was that the air component could not hit the Republican Guard at the optimum time—that is, when it was repositioning.

Doctrine supported this attempt to get control of the mission by the surface maneuver commander. VII Corps bit off more than it could chew and the ACC could do nothing about it but advise the JFC of the problem. The JFC forced the Corps to establish some control measure because he failed to do so. Subsequently, he failed to modify it from a theater perspective until it was too late.

It is easy to assign blame with the perfect vision afforded by hindsight. However, with one exception (mentioned below), every player's action was consistent with, and supported by, joint doctrine. Doctrine is supposed to help you navigate the unknowns of future combat operations, and there was no departure from it. It did not work. It was doctrinally correct in the command climate of Desert Storm to allow a surface maneuver commander to push the JFACC—who possessed an overwhelming preponderance of force—out of the fight. **When your doctrine allows this to happen, your doctrine is broken.**

A commander can depart from joint doctrine “when exceptional circumstances exist.”<sup>36</sup> Our flawed doctrine drove us to the point that “ultimately, CENTCOM [Central Command] took over the setting of the FSCL and used it as a boundary, assigning all terrain on one side to the ground commanders and all terrain and airspace on the other to the air component commander.”<sup>37</sup> But according to joint doctrine, the FSCL is not a boundary.

CENTCOM’s use of the FSCL as a boundary proves two points. First, the CINC acknowledged the need to draw a boundary between functional components, which he essentially did, albeit too late. Second, the FSCL, which by definition implies ownership of an AO by the surface maneuver commander, was not used as defined in joint doctrine.

The FSCL is a fire support coordination measure that tacitly acknowledges that the surface maneuver commander is responsible for portions of an AO he or she cannot influence to the extent that other commanders can.

Yet rather than relinquish control of that portion of his or her AO to another component or maneuver commander, an FSCL justifies holding on to his or her portion of the AO by not inhibiting anyone's fires in that area. This action suboptimizes all fires past the FSCL because no one is "designating the target priority, desired effects, and timing of such operations."<sup>38</sup> In other words, no one is in command.

XVIII Corps also established a FSCL to allow the engagement of the enemy exclusively by organic aviation. But the enemy was also too deep. The plan in this case was not logistically supportable. *Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm* was remarkably candid in its assessment of the situation and provides a joint view not found in *Certain Victory*.

In retrospect, the commitment of Army Aviation beyond Basrah, where distinct water lines constituted the best available line of separation between ground and air interdiction, was a poor solution. The Air Force capabilities, combining JSTARS observation with sophisticated attack tools, would seem likely to have been much more effective.<sup>39</sup>

XVIII Corps created an additional sanctuary for the enemy along the escape routes at Al-Basrah that could not be appreciated at the time. The actions of XVIII Corps, like those of VII Corps, were doctrinally correct. The retrospective assessment of that action in *Lucky War* embraces the spirit of jointness and is refreshing for that reason if no other.

Although the official US Army version of the events outlined in *Certain Victory: the US Army in the Gulf War*<sup>40</sup> blames the CINC for interfering with Corps commanders as well as the air component for the escape of the Republican Guard, more current information revealed in *The General's War*<sup>41</sup> contradicts the Army official position. **The fixing of blame throughout Certain Victory diverts attention from our fundamental problem: a dysfunctional joint doctrine rooted in the concept that only surface maneuver forces (read US Army forces) should command and control the battlefield.** Unless this issue is confronted and resolved, the integrity of joint doctrine will remain subject to the politics and friction of component competition and not component cooperation. The ideal of team war fighting will remain at odds with the reality of a corrupt doctrine.

## Conclusion

Joint Pub 3-0 is corrupt and must be corrected. Failure to deal honestly with the issue of airpower's exclusion from maneuver threatens the intellectual integrity of all US joint doctrine and undermines the trust and confidence required to fuse disparate components into a joint team. Until airpower is acknowledged as maneuver in joint doctrine, under the command of an air commander who has actual command authority, airpower will be consistently misapplied and suboptimized.

Much of the blame for the current state of affairs rests with the Air Force. Institutionally, the Air Force does not take doctrine seriously and will begin to pay a serious price because of the new authoritative nature of joint doctrine. Joint doctrine now has teeth that are eating away at any claim an airman may make on dimensional superiority or the ability to dominate in specific combat situations. The failure of the Air Force to lead in the doctrinal debate is paid for by reducing the credibility of airmen at the joint war-fighting table.

The Air Force has misplaced its priorities in the joint arena. We have become enamored with the technology of connectivity and lost sight of the substance of the debate. Any fancy window dressing applied to the ATO or JFACC staff process will not alter that simple fact. Any prerogative currently *assumed* to belong to the JFACC as a commander will be siphoned away by joint boards, committees, panels, and doctrinally directed, corporate-style air apportionment decisions designed to direct airpower into a supporting role.<sup>42</sup> This creates a situation in which the air component comes to the war-fighting table with a blank sheet of paper to record taskings rather than with a well articulated plan for optimizing airpower's contribution. If joint warfare is team warfare, it's time for the Air Force to join the team.

The surface warfare perspective of joint doctrine is quite different from that of an airman—not better or worse, just different. That is because soldiers and airmen operate in different environments with fundamentally different views of the battlefield. The airman, from his perch above the battlefield, has an operational and strategic view borne of

the range, speed, and flexibility of his or her environment. The airman implicitly understands how quickly effort can be shifted across the theater—not over the course of days but from mission to mission and even within the same mission. Our bomber heritage has driven us to think in terms of a maneuver force in the third dimension. As we have matured, we have come to understand how that maneuver complements the joint effort when it is allowed to participate as an equal partner.

Conversely, a corps is a maneuver unit and has a tactical focus. At corps and below, commanders concentrate on land force dominance within their AO, not the theater as a whole. However, joint doctrine empowers them to *inhibit, and indeed prohibit*, third-dimensional maneuver they do not own. Corps now plan at what they consider to be operational depths; but those plans invariably have a tactical focus of closing with and destroying the enemy surface forces. It is simply interdiction disguised as deep operations or operational maneuver. Calling interdiction “operational level warfare” is supported by a joint doctrine that creates CINCdoms within CINCdoms forcing Corps commanders to compete for theater assets they should not control.

History provides ample examples of the results of competing surface maneuver commanders—Patton *v.* Montgomery, MacArthur *v.* Nimitz, and possibly even Franks *v.* Luck. However, there are no similar competitions in airpower. That is because properly organized airpower has a theater focus, not an Army group or corps lane focus. Properly organized airpower has a single ACC with access to all airpower assets to support a theater plan.

General Ronald R. Fogelman, the Air Force chief of staff, has said “air and space power alone cannot win our nation’s wars.”<sup>43</sup> We need to fight as part of a team. Our mission is “to defend the United States through control and exploitation of air and space.” The Army “talks that talk” in the joint arena, but the stated job of the Army is to “win the nation’s wars.” With this perspective, only the Army can provide ultimate victory. Any other operation only supports establishing the conditions for decisive ground combat. Joint Pub 3-0 surrenders the doctrinal high ground to the Army. It’s time for airmen to stop working at the margins

and devoting so much time and effort to tactics, techniques, and procedures. Airmen have to get actively involved in the current and future joint doctrine debates.

### **Recommendations**

1. An authoritative joint doctrine is also a zero sum game. The problems discussed in this paper are a direct result of component desires to dominate the theoretical battle space in an effort to organize, train, and equip their way to the next high-intensity, conventional conflict. Joint doctrine must not be held hostage to parochial interests. It must honestly communicate the best ideas for integrating the distinctive capabilities of the services. Joint doctrine is a place for ideas and concepts—not power struggles and parochial agendas. The power to make joint doctrine the place of ideas resides with the individual who made it authoritative, that is, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. This research has made the clear case for a change in what we call joint doctrine.

2. Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, must be rewritten to eliminate the convoluted and dishonest discussion of maneuver. If Joint Pub 3-0 fails to speak in maneuver terms about airpower, this keystone document will poison all supporting doctrinal publications.

The following is a list of areas that must be addressed:

- Remove any caveat associated with maneuver. Maneuver remains appropriate as a principle of war but not as a means of dividing up the battlefield. The concept of maneuver forces as a separate and distinct grouping, although consistent with the US Army's *Battlefield Operating System*<sup>44</sup> approach to land combat, has no place in assigning command responsibility on a joint battlefield. Maneuver provides a way of thinking about battle-space dynamics; it is not a vehicle for task organizing in joint warfare.
- Remove any reference or inference that there is a difference between the capabilities of air assets due to their association with surface forces. Being organic to

a surface force adds no special value to air assets and may in fact limit their effectiveness in the joint fight.

- Remove the interdiction trilogy and its convoluted discussion; maintaining the current system with theater interdiction, air interdiction, and interdiction under the command of the surface maneuver commander is obsolete. Like maneuver, interdiction should be discussed as an approach to defeating the enemy and not as a mission area to be controlled by a specific unit or component. Interdiction is simply a means to an end.
- Remove the extensive discussion of the FSCL from Joint Pub 3-0. As it is currently used, the FSCL is a tactic, technique, and procedure (TTP) and not a key-stone doctrinal issue. Its relevance on a future battlefield is also quite dubious. If we have the moral courage to fix the problems with maneuver and interdiction, the FSCL becomes totally inappropriate. The inclusion of the FSCL in Joint Pub 3-0 is more a testament to the political power of the US Army Field Artillery Branch than to the intellectual rigor and honesty of joint doctrine.

The FSCL acknowledges the acceptance of uncoordinated and uncontrolled fires violating the principles of war. It also plainly acknowledges the increased risk of fratricide. In today's world, preventing fratricide is a zero-defects operation; accepting increased risk by use of "permissive fire support coordination measures" is a nonstarter.<sup>45</sup> The FSCL is currently perceived to be required because the JFC habitually gives the land maneuver commander control of too much of the fight.

### **Areas for Further Study**

The following areas should be included in future doctrinal debates and provide fertile ground for continuing research:

1. The concepts of interdiction and maneuver need to be combined. The current distinction is contrived and produces unacceptable friction inside the joint team. A single coherent concept of maneuver is not a great leap of faith. Interdiction is simply maneuver that is force oriented and separated by time or distance from classical close combat

between surface forces. Like maneuver, interdiction is executed by soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and special forces. Like maneuver, individual interdiction engagements have the same cumulative effect on campaign design and execution. The false distinctions drawn in current doctrine are simply a means to wrest control of battle space from the air component. As a joint team we need to mature out of that paradigm.

2. Information technology is critical to a revised battlefield framework. The antiquated AO structure can only be discarded when the means to rapidly, securely, and accurately change boundaries between responsible commanders is available. This is not seen as a revolutionary development but simply a means to allow the JFC the flexibility to properly integrate joint force capabilities.

#### Notes

1. Joint Publication (Pub) 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 10 January 1995, vi-vii.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., vii.

5. NDP 1, *Naval Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1994), 45; Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Air Force, 1992), 1; Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 14 June 1993), 2-5.

6. Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 1 February 1995, IV-8.

7. Positional advantage refers to a geometric relationship that unnecessarily restricts the concept of maneuver; it frames maneuver by reference to spatial relationships only. This may be appropriate in the game of chess or traditional land combat but is unnecessarily restrictive in full-dimensional operations. The concepts of time and information advantage are not included in this concept of maneuver; however, they should be included.

8. Ibid., A-2.

9. Edward C. Mann, *Thunder and Lightning: Desert Storm and the Airpower Debates* (Maxwell AFB, Ala: Air University Press, 1995), 117.

10. Joint Pub 3-0, IV- 8-9.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., IV-14.

13. Ibid., III-33.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., IV-12.

16. Ibid., IV-9.

17. Ibid., IV-12.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., IV-9.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., IV-11.
22. Ibid., IV-13.
23. Joint Pub 3-09, *Doctrine for Joint Fire Support: Second Draft*, I-6.
24. Joint Pub 1, II-6.
25. Joint Pub 3-0, GL-7.
26. Ibid., IV-17.
27. The answer is in Joint Pub 3-0. Within their AOs, "land and naval operational force commanders are designated the supported commander and are responsible for the synchronization of maneuver, fires, and interdiction. To facilitate this synchronization, such commanders designate the target priority, effects, and timing of interdiction operations within their AOs." This surface interdiction priority can be reflected in the JFC's apportionment decision. Air interdiction apportioned to the land commander is simply battlefield air interdiction.
28. Joint Pub 3-09, IV-15.
29. Joint Pub 3-0, IV-9.
30. Ibid., xiii.
31. Brig Gen Robert H. Scales Jr., USA, *Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, 1993), 305.
32. United States Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-XXX, *US Army Operational Concept for Aviation*, September 1993, 6.
33. Joint Pub 3-0, IV-13
34. Ibid.
35. Richard M. Swain, *Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 228.
36. Joint Pub 3-0, iii.
37. Swain, 228.
38. Joint Pub 3-09, I-6.
39. Ibid.
40. Scales.
41. Michael R. Gordon and Gen Bernard E Trainor, USMC Ret, *The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1995), 464-65.
42. Joint Pub 3-0, III-26-27.
43. Policy letter, *Teamwork*, from the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, January 1995.
44. For an extensive discussion of the battlefield operating systems see US Army FM 100-20.
45. The FSCL concept is unacceptable for the following the reasons:
  - (1) Militarily, it violates the principles of war—specifically, unity of command. This is because no one is in command or in control of the area beyond the FSCL; there is simply ownership of an AO. Economy of force is violated because multiple forces could be engaging the same

target. The coordination requirement beyond the FSCL is no substitute for control of the fight beyond the FSCL. Simplicity is violated due to liaison requirements and mass because effort is dissipated throughout a larger area, not focused for maximum effect.

(2) Politically, the FSCL is indefensible in the event of a friendly-fire incident. Today's military cannot go on Cable News Network to explain that our sons or daughters, or those of our allies or coalition partners, are dead because our coordination measures don't coordinate anything. How do we explain in peacetime that our doctrine openly acknowledges the increased risk of fratricide because no one was in command but we shot anyway?

(3) Economically, we cannot afford to be engaging targets with one-shot multimillion dollar systems like Tomahawk land attack missiles (TLAM) and Army tactical missile systems (ATACM) which at the same time might be engaged by other systems. The Army cannot afford to develop another robust deep battle structure of major weapon systems and command and control that duplicate air component capabilities. Although redundant capabilities are desirable for providing options to the JFC, we simply cannot afford to fund them.

(4) Morally, the FSCL creates a free-fire zone with no implied and possibly no actual constraints on the use of force to minimize civilian casualties or collateral damage.